



The Green Gazette

The Collier County Master Gardener Newsletter
Volume 1 Issue 4 December 2010

Coordinator's Corner *By Cathy Feser, Urban Horticulture*

Welcome...to our last edition of the Green Gazette for 2010. One of our most successful endeavors was this year's Yard & Garden Show. Despite the current economic climate, the 2010 Yard & Garden Show saw a 33% increase in vendor participation and a 43% increase in net revenue, which is used to enhance and expand programs and Master Gardener education. Our success is credited to the efforts of the Master Gardeners and Extension support staff Linda Hetrick and Peggy McDonough. MG Jo-Anne Lewis, event Chair, kept everyone on task and on time. A big thank you goes to all the committee members for their achievements: Mary Lynn Murphy and Faye Hunt's tireless recruitment efforts resulted in a 33% increase in the number of participating vendors. Linda Sue Plourde headed up the MG Ask Me table, while she and Polly Nesi seamlessly coordinated the MG demonstrations and educational programs respectively, attended by 84% of the Yard & Garden Show visitors. Hospitality, organized by Diane Breithaupt once again received rave reviews from the vendors, as did the 4-H Plant Transport teams. Jim Hiatt went above and beyond in the parking lot throughout the 2-day event, alongside Jaimet and Jesus, high school community service volunteers, Virginia Williams, Elaine Sima, and organizer Liz Reo. Thanks also to Kris Morton for double duty as Entrance table coordinator and educational demonstrator, and to veteran ticket-takers and newcomers Rosemary Hamtil and Roberta Ury.

The Frugal Gardener

By Leah Ray

The simple act of creating something unique from everyday materials, or sharing the fruits of our gardening labor with others is a year-round joy for frugal gardeners. But the expression "to everything, there is a season," applies even to us. So here are a few ways to conserve your garden time, effort, and money as our "season" approaches.

Plant Perennials Our annuals should be called *monthlies*. They don't survive the year in our climate. Perennials are beautiful and much more cost-effective. Try geraniums, begonias, salvias and bromeliads.

Plant Sharing Craigslist and Dave's Garden are two websites that support this. I have even been contacted by a chef wanting a plant that I had complained on-line about as an invasive weed. You never know. Neighbor plant pass-alongs also work like our Master Gardener plant exchanges. Try something new, share your extras, or replace tired plants inexpensively.

Free Mulch Naples Landfill and the Recycling Center have mulch available Monday through Friday.

More tips on page 2

2011 Garden Workshop Series Begins January 13

By Kris Morton

We have a wonderful lineup of lectures for the 2011 Workshop Series. The planning started only weeks after our last lecture ended this last March. Attendees were asked to submit topic ideas for future lectures, and after reviewing hundreds, we came up with what we hope will be a very successful series.



Keith Whipple will be our first speaker on Thursday, January 13. Keith is a Landscape Architect with 20 years of experience in Florida, with clients including Disney in Orlando, & University of Central Florida. His mission – help SW Floridians save water, money, and go green.

On Thursday, January 20, Master Gardener & Certified Horticulturalist Fred Mueller will speak on "Palms as Tropical Accents."

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Garden Workshop Series begins January 13th

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Fred will cover palms for every location – from living rooms & lanais to landscape, along with growth patterns & cultural needs.

On Thursday, January 27, Chad Washburn, Director of Conservation and Education at Naples Botanical Gardens, and President of Naples Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, will be our speaker. Chad will speak about the benefits of using native plants for home landscaping in SW Florida.

Thomas Hecker has spoken several times over the years at our Series, and has a wealth of information. The attendees wanted him back. Thomas, with his wit and knowledge, will be speaking Thursday, February 3, on "Gardening in Small Spaces," including patios, courtyards, & lanais.

We had multiple requests for roses, so on Thursday, February 10, Ken Mayberger of Roseglen, will speak on how to successfully grow roses AND Victoria Water lilies in SW Florida.

And that's only the first half of our Series. Our second half includes Terry Seeley on "Colorful Crotons," Ray Pelletier on "Perennials Portfolio Plus," authors Gary Schmelz & Glen Stacell on "Wild & Wonderful: Wildflowers of South Florida," the "Orchidaceae Tour" (open only to series card holders), and Mike Malloy "Going Vertical with Your Gardens."

Our entire schedule is included in this issue on page 3. Registration forms for Pre-Pay can be found on the [Collier County Extension Office website](#). The cost is \$25 for the entire series, or \$7 each for individual lectures. So beat the rush and pay by mail. We look forward to seeing you all in January!

The Frugal Gardener

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Tree Service Mulch Call several companies to ask for un-diseased hardwood (no palm material). You are taking a chance with diseases but that is your choice. I have been a gambler for a decade.

Produce Stands Inquire about leftover corn husks and such for your compost pile. But be prepared for them to bury you in their unwanted organic material!

Coffee Grounds Starbucks and other coffee sellers share their coffee grounds. For alkaline soils, these somewhat acidic grounds are especially helpful..

Large Plant Labels Print plant names on those free paint stir sticks using hobby paints.



L Ray

Top Zone10 Performer

By Faye Hunt

Do you have a hot, sunny spot just craving color? If so, the Blanket Flower *Gaillardia pulchella* can provide a long-lasting, fiery display. This drought tolerant native volunteer from seed, but can also be propagated from root cuttings. Its high salt



F Hunt

tolerance, preference for well-drained soils, and low maintenance make it ideal for many locations, including shorelines. Flowers appear during summer on plants reaching 2-3 feet tall and 1 foot wide. Enjoy blooms as long-lasting cut flowers, and deadhead spent blooms to prolong flowering. Many cultivars are available, with single, double, or semi double blooms in shades of yellows, oranges, and deep fiery reds. See [UF Article FPS217 Gaillardia pulchella](#) for more information.



We'd love to hear (and publish) YOUR nifty, thrifty tips!
Email them to the Frugal Gardener at CollierMG@ifas.ufl.edu

2011 Educational Garden Workshop Series

All sessions will be held at
the
Unity of Naples Church
2000 Unity Way
Naples, FL 34112

10:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m.

Thursday, January 13th

Keith Whipple

The New Green Florida Garden

How to have an environmentally friendly garden.
UF Publication ENH 1065 Compost Tips for the
Home Gardener

Thursday, January 20th

Fred Mueller - Master Gardener

Palms - A Tropical Accent

Small, Medium and Large: Growth patterns and
cultural needs can keep palms beautiful year
after year, whether in the living room, lanai or
landscape.

UF Publication ENH21 Ornamental Palms for
South Florida

Thursday, January 27th

Chad Washburn

SWFL Native Plants

Matching plants with the specific conditions
in the landscape will keep them healthy and
beautiful with minimum care.

UF Publication ENH 875 Native Plants for Florida

Thursday, February 3rd

Thomas Hecker

Gardening in Small Spaces

Patios, courtyards and lanais: Small gardens
have all the advantages of large gardens with
one big benefit: ease of maintenance.

Thursday, February 10th

Ken Mayberger

Roses and Victoria Water Lilies in SW Florida

Share Ken's adventures growing roses and wa-
ter lilies in SW Florida

UF Publication CIR344 Growing Roses in Florida

Thursday, February 17th

Terry Seeley

Colorful Crotons

With almost limitless leaf forms, the many va-
rieties of these year-round beauties provide a
color explosion in the garden.

<http://crotonconnection.com>

Thursday, February 24th

Ray Pelletier

Perennials Portfolio Plus

How to select and maintain plants and woody
ornamentals, where to plant them, and new
arrivals.

UF Publication ENH68 Flowering Perennials for
Florida

Thursday, March 3rd

Gary Schmelz & Glen Stacell

Wild & Wonderful: Wildflowers of South Florida

Take a virtual walk and explore and appreciate
the beauty nature has all around.

[http:// Florida Wildflowers](http://FloridaWildflowers)

Thursday, March 10th

Orchidaceae Tour

Series Card Holders Only

Space is limited

Sign up required by February 24

Thursday, March 17th

Mike Malloy

Going Vertical with Your Gardens

Running out of space to plant? Elevate your
garden with trellises, vines and more.

UF Publication CIR 860 Flowering Vines for
Florida

Create your Own "Fruit of the Month" Harvest

By Mary Jane Cary, with [Spanish Edition](#) and [German Edition](#) by Betzy Hussmann

There are so many different fruits that grow here in South Florida, is it possible to create our own year-round garden "Fruit of the Month" harvest? So far during 2010, we've described the beautiful evergreen **Loquat** that delights us with fragrant flowers starting in October, and tasty fruits in February and March. Next, we discovered four varieties of **Peaches** that produce fragrant blossoms in January, with juicy fruits during April and May. (See our [August 2010 Green Gazette](#) for more information on these two recommendations). Then we explored three varieties of **Apples**, with their fragrant pink and white blooms in February, followed by crispy fruits during June and July, which we featured in our [October 2010 Green Gazette](#). But where do we go from here?

For a healthy harvest in August and September, consider the **Pineapple**



Guava *Feijoa sellowiana*. This Myrtle family member creates a dense evergreen shrub or small multi-trunked tree which grows 10 to 15 feet high and wide. Red and white blooms, whose petals are edible, appear in the spring, followed by round to egg-shaped fruits that mature in August and September. And the great news is that this particular species does not share the invasive habits of the Apple Guava *Psidium guajava* or the Cattley or Strawberry Guava *Psidium littoral*. As a result, the Pineapple Guava is now the only guava species recommended for South Florida landscapes. For more information, see the [UF Article ENH408 Feijoa sellowiana Pineapple Guava](#).



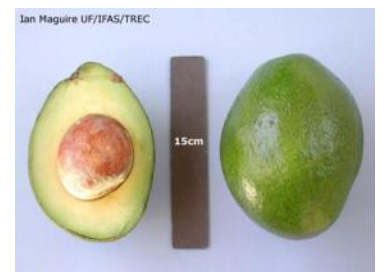
In October and November, we can begin enjoying the **Pummelo** *Citrus maxima*, the largest citrus fruit and ancestor of the grapefruit. Pummelo trees are typically small to medium in size, with low branches which produce large, highly fragrant flowers followed by very large pear-shaped to round fruits. This means each fruit can weigh 3 pounds or more! The peel is quite thick, but easy to remove, revealing mild to sweet pulp that varies from yellow to red in color, depending upon the variety. This fruit enjoys a long shelf life after harvest. Just wrap each fruit in paper, and store in a ventilated container. After three months, the peel appears quite wrinkled, but the pulp is frequently even juicier and more enjoyable. And since Pummelos can flower up to four times a year, you may enjoy this tree's fragrance and its refreshing fruits several times throughout the year.



And last, we can celebrate December and January with the luscious buttery **Avocado** *Persea Americana*



Monroe variety. Although there are many avocado varieties with summer and fall harvest seasons, the Monroe variety is the most common winter harvest variety. The large fruits have tasty flesh and a medium large seed inside a smooth, glossy green skin. The tree produces mature avocados from November through mid-February, and acts like a living warehouse, holding the fruits for you after they reach maturity! For more information about growing avocados, see [UF article CIR1034 Avocado Growing in the Florida Home Landscape](#) or [UF article Spanish edition HS1039 El Aguacate en Florida](#).



These are just a few of the many fruits that grow well here in South Florida. So with a little planning and care, we can create a beautiful AND edible landscape, with year-round bountiful harvests for family and friends, PLUS beautiful flowers, delightful fragrance, and cooling shade.

Your Dooryard Fruit Orchard—Planting and Young Tree Care

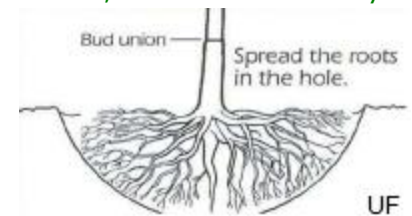
By Mary Jane Cary, with [Spanish Edition](#) and [German Edition](#) by Betsy Hussmann

Although fruit trees are not considered low maintenance, our efforts are rewarded with cool shade, wonderful fragrances, and bountiful harvests of delicious fruits. Yet if we select from among the cultivars recommended for our area, plant them using suggested methods, and care for these young trees as outlined by UF guidelines, we can enjoy an beautiful and edible landscape for years to come.

In our latest [2010 Green Gazette English, Spanish and German editions](#), we have featured a number of different fruit trees, and the specific cultivars that are recommended for South Florida. Trees purchased in containers can be planted anytime if adequate irrigation is applied, and one to two year old healthy bare root trees may be planted anytime during their dormant season. But the best time to plant young tropical fruit trees is in May—early August when air and soil temperatures are warming and the summer rains are beginning. We can rely on [UF article HS886 Your Dooryard Citrus Guide—Site Selection](#) for general site selection and planting guidance for our entire orchard. When selecting a site, be sure to avoid low areas or sites most susceptible to late spring frosts, salt spray, and periodic or prolonged flooding or saturation. Also be aware that fruit and citrus trees tend to flower and fruit best in full sun.

While all fruit trees are generally tolerant of a wide range of soils, they perform best in well-drained soils. Loquats and some citrus trees can even be grown in containers or above-ground planters, as long as there is adequate drainage. But peach trees are more sensitive to soil pH, performing best in soils with a pH of 6.0 - 6.5. Peach trees are more sensitive to standing water than citrus trees, so raised beds may be beneficial, particularly in areas with high water tables.

Plant trees in well-drained soil slightly deeper than their nursery growth depth, taking care to "mud in" the planting hole with water. This practice assures that the roots have good contact with the soil, and that there are no air pockets. When considering the spacing between trees, remember that some varieties, like apples, avocados, oranges, and peaches, need cross-pollination to set fruit. So be sure to provide more than one cultivar of each variety nearby. In addition, plant all trees away from buildings and electrical wires, with adequate space to reach maturity.



Maintain a 3 - 4 foot grass and weed-free area around the tree base during the first year. This method enables the tree to enjoy the maximum growing season length during its first year, and minimizes potential tree damage and required irrigation. Applying a 2-6" bark or wood chip mulch under avocado trees can reduce weeds, improve soils near the surface, and assist with moisture retention, but be sure to maintain a 1 foot mulch-free area around the tree base to prevent rotting of the tree base.

Water newly planted trees at least once weekly during their first three years, and consistently during dry spells. You can minimize foliage and fruit diseases by irrigating near ground level within the drip line instead of spraying the leaves. Irrigation is especially important for Florida peaches, since they typically ripen during late April and May when rainfall amounts are typically low.

Freezing temperatures are one of the most common challenges for our fruit and citrus trees, but there are some steps we can take. First, before cold weather begins, pull any mulch underneath your trees back to the drip line. The exposed soil is warmed by sunlight during the day, and releases this heat to the air at night. Also, irrigating the ground around your trees for several days before a frost increases the soils' ability to radiate heat during nighttime lows. You can monitor your local weather conditions at the [UF Florida Automated Weather Network FAWN](#), and [learn what to do after a freeze](#).

Fertilization and pruning are best performed as temperatures begin warming, so we'll continue our fruit tree and citrus tree care topics in our February, 2011 issue.

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2010: A Busy Year...



Attendees (left) at the Garden Workshop Series (January—March)



Guest speakers such as Thomas Hecker, owner of Eco-Botanical Designs, share secrets of successful gardening



MGs Mary Lynn Murphy (left) and Dianna Donnelly assist with pond renovation in the Native Plant Garden in June



The overwhelming Oak was removed in September



MGs Faye Hunt and Mary Lynn Murphy assemble the Living Wall in the Courtyard Garden



What is this Plant?

Both of these plants are the American Beautyberry *Callicarpa americana*. This deciduous shrub, which can reach 5—8 feet tall and wide, has light green, fuzzy leaves on long arched branches. Small lavender-pink blooms appear in summer, followed by clusters of berries, which attract many birds. The variety *lactea* has darker green leaves and white berries. Check out [UF Fact Sheet FPS90 Callicarpa Americana](#) for more information.

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Now Playing In SW FL Gardens...

By Leah Ray

Did you know that the US has 11 Temperature Zones (aka *hardiness, climate, or growing zones*), and **Florida has 4 of these zones!** This means that temperate vegetables like tomatoes are best grown only during the cooler fall and winter months. They typically can't survive our hot, humid summers.

Vegetables: Best bets for planting at this time are celery, cauliflower, lettuce, cabbage, and carrots.

Herbs: This cooler dry weather is great for parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, cilantro, garlic, and chives.

Turf: If the lawn has not become totally dependent on an irrigation system, two days (or even less) per week of watering should be fine. Watch for [Brown Patch *Rhizoctonia* Blight](#), which thrives Nov—May in St. Augustine and Zoysia. It is usually triggered by excessive irrigation and too much nitrogen fertilizer - two things you can prevent. That being said, start the New Year off with a good weed and feed.

House Plants: Keep an eye on the light levels as the sun is further to the South this time of year. Also, the drier air inside can cause problems. Misting with non-chlorinated water works wonders. The chlorine in tap water will disperse if left out a day or two.

Christmas Plants: Poinsettias may be planted in the landscape after the coldest temps have passed. Amaryllis may also be planted outside. Just avoid planting them too deep, as the bulb pulls itself into the soil as it grows. Christmas Cactus, of the Zygo-cactus family, are called cacti, but have nothing in common with desert cactus. They are epiphytes and more similar to orchids in their care. After it blooms, allow it to rest for 30 days in a cool place, providing limited water. It may lose leaves and appear weak during this rest period. You can replot it in March.

Composting: Fallen leaves are great for the compost pile but remember that compost needs to heat up to 160 degrees to really cook.

Pruning: Prune non-Spring flowering shrubs and trees in January. [Avoid "Crape murder,"](#) by only trimming crossing branches, small twig growth, and seed pods. Some plants may be damaged by cold temps in January. It's best to just leave the damaged tips until new growth appears, so resist the urge to trim.

Cold Temperatures: Last year we had some unusually low temperatures, with highs that did not reach the 50's before the next frost/freeze. Many factors influence plant survival: daytime temperatures, day length, wind, rainfall, humidity and soil type. But it is also important to remember that your own yard has multiple microclimates. Bring orchids indoors and cover plumerias when temperatures dip below 45 degrees. *And keep your fingers crossed this year.*

Calendar

See [Collier Extension Calendar](#) for more details.

All events held at Extension office unless noted.

Call 239 353 4244 to register for all classes.

December

Dec 1 [December South FL Garden Calendar](#)

Dec 7 FYN Class 10 am — 12 pm. Free.

Dec 18 Dr. Dougbug Walk-in Clinic at **Home Depot**, Davis & Airport-Pulling. 10 a.m. – Noon.

January 2011

Jan 1 [January South FL Garden Calendar](#)

Jan 13 **Garden Workshop 10-week Series begins.** Every Thursday through Mar 17, 10-11:30 am.

February

Feb 1 Next Green Gazette Newsletter

Feb 1 [February South FL Garden Calendar](#)

Do you enjoy meeting new people? Are you interested in learning more about horticulture, Florida gardening? Are you interested in sharing your knowledge and experiences through community education?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, you may be interested in becoming a

**University of Florida
Certified Master Gardener**

NEW FOR 2011!!

Collier County Extension Services will offer
**Two Master Gardener Training Courses in
2011**

**January 8th—April 2nd
and**

March 2nd—May 25th
For more information and
online application visit
<http://collier.ifas.ufl.edu>

and click on Master Gardener Program
Or call 239-353-4244

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Avoid Visits from these Landscape “Ghosts of Christmas Past”

By Mary Jane Cary

People have been decorating their homes for the holidays with festive seasonal greenery for centuries, and many of us pride ourselves on the creative use, or re-use, of plant materials from our landscape. But as Scrooge learned in Charles Dicken’s *A Christmas Carol*, we may wish to avoid these two potential landscaping liabilities.



The search for that perfect Christmas tree may lead us towards a beautiful potted **Norfolk Island Pine**, with their layered branches of soft green needles. We can enjoy years of well-behaved growth and beauty from this species as long as it remains in a container, either indoors or outdoors. But those who dare to transplant this innocent-looking plant into the ground are asking for trouble. Our climate encourages rapid growth which leads to loss of lower needles and limbs, soft wood vulnerable to frequent breakage in wind-storms, and a height vulnerable to lightning strikes.

The end result is an unattractive, oversized liability for surrounding buildings, vehicles and people that is hazardous to keep and costly to remove. If you simply **MUST** plant it, be prepared to remove it before it overstays its welcome. If you’re shopping for a live Christmas tree, a [Southern Redcedar](#) *Juniperus silicicola* or [Sand Pine](#) *Pinus clausa* are good landscape options.



And think twice before using greenery from the **Brazilian Pepper**. Mistakenly known as Florida Holly, those green shiny leaves and fresh red berries can produce the same symptoms as its close relative, Poison Ivy! This invasive weed can also can sicken animals and crowd out native plants. A suitable holiday greenery alternative is the native [Dahoon Holly](#) *Ilex cassine*, which can be grown as a tree or shrub. For dense hedge options, [Varnish-Leaf](#) or [Elderberry](#) are Florida-friendly alternatives.



Contact a [Master Gardener Plant Clinic](#) Near YOU!

Call us at (239) 353 2872, email CollierMG@ifas.ufl.edu, or Walk In

Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays

9 am— Noon and 1 — 4 pm

Collier Co Extension 14700 Immokalee Rd.

Tuesdays

9 am — Noon

Naples Regional Library 650 Central Ave.

Thursdays

9 am — Noon and 1 — 4 pm

Naples Botanical Garden 4820 Bayshore Dr.

Saturdays

10:00 a.m.— Noon

Home Depot at Davis & Airport-Pulling Rd.

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